

LONG DISTANCE WALKERS ASSOCIATION : SURREY GROUP

Report and Results of the Nineteenth Winter Tanners

14th January 1996

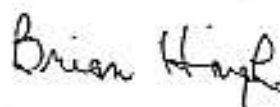
First of all many thanks to those who helped at the Start, Finish and Check Points. Dave Challenger, Sue Boyman, and Cyril Watmore at the Start and CP1; Tony Youngs, Jean and Harry Lowe, Ken Styan and Julia Haigh at CP2, and Graham Peddie at Tanners Hatch Youth Hostel which once again was on the route. Without their help there would not have been a Winter Tanners.

It was still dark when I arrived in the car park at Leatherhead to open up the Start and take entries from those who had not entered previously. The weather forecast promised a dry day and as dawn broke it looked as if the promise would be kept - which it was. Some entrants complained the weather was too warm for a Winter Tanners and I suppose they were right. The first part of the route was familiar, up to Bocketts Farm but from there it was across to Denbies Vineyard, one of the biggest in Europe, before reaching CP1 on the A25 to the west of Dorking. From there the route went further south, to Coldharbour, from where a pleasant loop revealed extensive views from the lower slopes of Leith Hill. CP 2, at Windy Gap, was well placed, just a half mile from the top. The previous stretch had been a hard climb so it was no surprise when three of the walkers decided to retire at this check point.

From the top there was a long downhill section to Paddington Farm before crossing the A25 again followed by the railway, near the bottom of the escarpment. Climbing up the face of the North Downs to Ranmore Common can be a bit of a challenge but John Westcott, who had designed the route, showed his compassion by selecting a track which slanted up the hillside; probably the most gentle ascent between Dorking and Guildford! Tanners Hatch Youth Hostel - fifty years old this year - was soon reached after passing over the top and then it was simply a case of switching over to auto pilot for the last four miles to the finish.

Both entries and starters were up on last year, undoubtedly helped by the good weather and Essex and Herts. deciding to hold their AGM on a different day. Many thanks. 108 entered before the day and 73 on the day. We had 168 starters and 161 recorded finishers, 22 more than 1995. Included in the results are Dave Challenger and myself. We heard such a lot of complimentary comments about the route that we just had to see it for ourselves which we did on the following day. There are definite advantages in being retired! When we stopped for refreshments on the top of Leith Hill we had a one minute silence for all of those still working.

Once again the popularity of this event showed there is a definite place in the calendar for a no frills event with only the minimum of support. We had two check points, each in a car park, and a drinks stop at Tanners Hatch YH. There were no facilities at the start or finish. Nobody complained because they knew in advance what to expect.



Brian Haigh Organiser

19th January 1996

P.S. If anybody lost a hat and torch and compass they should contact me to claim them.

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